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of the recording angel, is unrolled before the throne of the Almighty. It is the history of man as a religious being; the history of the soul; of its errors in the darkness of paganism; its efforts to burst into futurity; the fair creations which it summoned up, lighted by the fires of imagination, yet ever varying and fading like the glories of a sunset sky; its long wanderings, when, roaming dove-like over the encompassing deluge, it found nought but the olive branch of hope, and finally the rapture with which it welcomed the tidings of Revelation. In this momentous history, the religion of Greece and Rome occupies no small nor insignificant place. It shews the utmost verge which man, unaided by light from heaven, can reach; the native dignity, and grace, and athletic strength of the mind; the stern force with which, like the primeval race of Titans, it strove to mount to Olympus; the sublime resignation with which it awaited the coming of the last great foe. Happily for the scholar, happily for all who would be versed in the lore of the soul, this eventful portion of the spiritual history of man has been embodied in a literature, which is destined to endure till human nature itself shall be changed.

ART. V. — *The Laboring Classes in Europe.*

1. *A Lecture on the Working Men's Party, first delivered October 6th, before the Charlestown Lyceum, and published at their request.* By EDWARD EVERETT. Boston. 1830.
2. *An Oration delivered before the Trades' Union of Boston and Vicinity, on Fort Hill, on the Fifty-eighth Anniversary of American Independence.* By FREDERIC ROBINSON. Boston. 1834.
3. *The Rights of Industry, addressed to the Working Men of the United Kingdom.* By the Author of "THE RESULTS OF MACHINERY." Philadelphia. 1832.

WE have not selected the works whose titles are placed at the head of this article, because they are recent, or unknown

to our readers, but in order to enable us to direct the public attention to the subject of which they treat.

There is no more universal characteristic of human nature, than a disposition to find fault with our present condition, whatever it may be. Every body praises the age that has gone by, and looks forward to a future day as one which shall bring relief to all present inconveniences. It is this propensity to discontent, on which modern reformers are so ready to seize, for the purpose of disseminating their peculiar doctrines. They assume the existence of acknowledged evils, and thence endeavor to draw the conclusion that the cause of these evils is what they would pretend to reform. They depict the horrors of poverty, the pride and luxurious indolence of the rich, and forthwith preach up a crusade against wealth, and the laws by which it is protected. In this way, covert attacks are daily made upon our own institutions and laws ; and as their conclusions are apparently drawn from acknowledged facts, honest minds are often deceived, and discontent is excited, when no cause of complaint in fact exists.

There is no more common mode of attempting to mislead the public sentiment, than by describing a state of things existing in other countries, and assuming that it exists also in our own. Men talk very correctly of the evils of an established aristocracy, with its hereditary wealth, its vices and its power ; and having done so, they stamp the picture with an American name, in order to excite jealousies among our own citizens ; when, in fact, the description is no more a delineation of American manners and institutions, than a Norwegian landscape resembles the vine-clad hills of France or Italy. It is thus that the outcry about the rights of the "working men" has been raised so loudly in our country. We are told of the condition of these classes in England ; of the starving mechanic and the oppressed manufacturer ; of the poor-houses, crowded with healthy laborers, destitute of the ordinary necessities of life ; and in the same breath an appeal is made to the mechanic and manufacturer here, to subvert the laws, which grind down the laboring classes to the dust ; as if there were some real analogy between our condition and that of England, in respect to the laws which regulate property, the means of subsistence, or the rewards of industry.

So many appeals have been made of late to the prejudices of the people, and so much misconstruction and misrep-

resentation have been resorted to, with the view of exciting discontent in the community, that we have been induced to compare the condition of the laboring classes in the United States, with that of similar classes in some of the European nations. In pursuing this investigation we have had particular reference to the rate of wages, the burden of taxation, the means of subsistence, the facilities for acquiring education, and the share, if any, which these classes have in the government. The sources from which our facts have been gathered are, among others, books of travels, statistical tables, the leading English reviews, reports of Parliament, speeches delivered before that body, and other works which appeared to be of an authentic character. Our notice of several of the European nations, however, must be exceedingly brief, because the picture of the life of their peasants is too uniform to admit of much detail. Poverty, degradation, and toil, from generation to generation, form the epitome of their personal and political existence.

In most of the Northern nations, in particular, the laboring classes are alike strangers to what an American calls liberty, and to what are here regarded as the essential comforts of life.

In Norway, farms are cultivated by a class of laborers, called "house-men," who receive from the landlord a house and a quantity of land, and in return work for him at a low, fixed price, whenever he demands their labor. The ordinary food of the peasantry of the country is bread and gruel, both prepared of oatmeal, with an occasional intermixture of dried fish. Meat is a luxury which they rarely enjoy.

In Sweden, the peasantry are comparatively well educated; that is, most of them can read and write. Their dress is prescribed by law. Their food consists of hard bread, dried fish and gruel, without meat. In some districts their houses are mere log-cabins, covered with bark or turf; and, we believe, throughout the kingdom they are in general little, if at all, superior to the rude structures, which the settler rears in our western wilds.

In Denmark, the peasantry are still held in bondage, and are bought and sold together with the land on which they labor. Their food and dwelling houses are similar to those which we have just described.

In Russia, the bondage of the peasantry is even more complete, than it is in Denmark. There are, properly, but two

native classes ; the noble, and the peasant, or serf. The intermediate class of industrious and independent men, who transact the commercial business of her cities, are principally foreigners, not permanently resident in the country. All the land in the empire is owned by the nobles, and whenever any portion of it is sold, the peasantry who reside upon it are transferred with the estate. These have generally about half the time at their own disposal ; but are at all times liable to be called upon to labor for their masters. The better class of the peasants live in cottages, with stables or barns attached to them, but a great majority have only cottages, one portion of which is occupied by the family, while the other is appropriated to domestic animals. Few, if any, have beds, but sleep upon bare boards, or upon parts of the immense stoves by which their houses are warmed. Their food consists of black bread, cabbage, and other vegetables, without the luxury of animal food, or even the addition of butter. During some seasons of the year the women are employed in the fields, as they are in many other parts of Europe.

In Poland, the condition of the serfs or laboring classes is, if possible, more degraded than in Russia. The nobles are the proprietors of the land, and the peasants are slaves. If a plebeian strike a noble, his punishment is death. We quote in this connexion the language of a recent traveller : " I travelled in every direction, and never saw a wheaten loaf to the eastward of the Rhine, in any part of Northern Germany, Poland, or Denmark." Another writer, describing Poland in 1826, says, " the peasants live in wooden huts, covered with thatch or shingles, consisting of one room with a stove, around which the inhabitants and their cattle crowd together, and where the most disgusting kinds of filthiness are to be seen. Their common food is cabbage, potatoes, sometimes, but not generally, peas, black bread and soup, or rather gruel, without the addition of butter or meat, and the chief drink is water, or the cheap whisky of the country." These, it must be remembered, are not the paupers of the country, supported at the public charge, and fed by the labor of others. They are the working men ; the only class that engage in honest industry and toil. They cannot rise from their state of degradation ; this is alike forbidden by the long established customs of these countries, and by harsh and oppressive laws.

In two of the countries we have mentioned, Norway and

Sweden, the peasantry are represented in the diet, and of course, possess some influence in the management of the affairs of government ; while in Denmark, Poland and Russia, they must obey the will of others, and are subject to the scarcely limited control of their hereditary masters.

Germany comprises a large number of separate states, in which the condition of the laboring classes varies according to the character of their respective laws. In some, they are comparatively free and well educated ; in others, the feudal burdens are still imposed upon the cultivators of the soil. In Prussia, for instance, where, notwithstanding the despotic character of the government, the people are more intelligent and free than in many of the German states, a common citizen was not, till the year 1807, permitted to purchase the estate of a noble. Nor were the nobles, prior to the year 1810, subject to any tax upon their lands.

In general, the inhabitants of the protestant states of Germany are more free and better educated, than they are in those where the catholic religion is the established one. In Austria, the most powerful of the states, the nobles are the proprietors of the land, and the peasants are compelled to work for their masters during every day of the week, excepting Sunday. The cultivators of the soil are in a state of bondage. In Hungary, their condition is, if possible, still worse. There is no intermediate class between the noble and the slave. The whole population exceeds eight millions, while there are only sixty thousand noble families. The nobles own the land, do no work and pay no taxes. The laboring classes are obliged to repair all the highways and bridges, are liable at any time to have soldiers quartered upon them, and are compelled to pay one tenth of the produce of their labor to the church, and one ninth to the lord whose land they occupy. They are also subject to various other duties and impositions. The following anecdote, which is related by a recent traveller,* will illustrate the condition of the laboring classes in Hungary. He spent a few weeks at the residence of one of the most respectable Hungarian noblemen. Taking a walk one afternoon with the count over part of the grounds, they came upon some peasants who were enjoying their own rustic amusements. The count imagined that one of them did not notice him, as he passed, with

* Russell.

sufficient humility. He immediately sent to his house for some servants, and ordered them to seize, bind and lash the poor man. His orders were instantly executed. The visitor entreated the count to put an end to such a punishment for such a trivial offence, if it were one at all. The answer was, "What! do you intercede for such a brute? He is no nobleman. That these people may not think any body cares for them, give him twenty lashes more." And they were accordingly administered.

We might also state various facts, to shew the depressed state of manufactures in some of these states, and the almost starving condition of many of the artizans; but our limits will not permit us to enter into this detail.

In many of the German states, the means of education are extremely limited. In Austria the press is under a severe censorship, and nothing finds its way to the public eye, excepting what the cabinet may choose to publish. The reply of the emperor, during the session of the congress at Laybach, to the teacher of a public seminary, has often been quoted. "I want no learned men, I need no learned men, I want men who will do as I bid them." It is said that in Hungary, of whole villages, not an individual can read or write; and that, of the inhabitants of Hungary, Transylvania and Croatia, all of which are within the Austrian dominions, twelve millions are entirely ignorant and uninstructed.

These remarks will present a view of the condition of the laboring classes in the states and kingdoms to which we have referred. It would be little better than mere repetition, to enlarge upon the state of the idle nobles and beggars of Italy, the priest-ridden people of Spain, or the unemployed and impoverished tradesmen and artizans of Holland or Belgium. We shall, therefore, pass at once to France.

Although our intercourse with that kingdom in the way of trade and commerce is so frequent, we know comparatively little of the actual condition of the great mass of her population. Her past history is in a measure familiar to all, but it is not so easy to determine or describe, with precise accuracy, the civil rights which are enjoyed by the people at the present day. The revolution effected a great change in the feudal condition of society and property. In 1820, about one half of the whole population were landed proprietors. About two thirds of them are now engaged in agricultural pursuits, and of

these, about five millions are not proprietors. Of the manufacturing population, between four and five millions of laborers are destitute of property.

We have not room to enter into detail as to the condition of the manufacturing classes in France, but if we can credit the statements of travellers, it is more wretched than even that of the same classes in England, to which we propose to allude more particularly, before we close. We may, however, remark here, that we have good authority for saying, that the highest wages of a cotton manufacturer in France are not more than five shillings and sixpence a week. Even these are higher than the wages of similar manufacturers in other countries on the continent. In Switzerland and Austria, they are four shillings, in the Tyrol, three shillings and ninepence, in Saxony, three shillings and sixpence, and in Prussia, two shillings and sixpence. The wages of cotton manufacturers on the continent of Europe, may be considered as varying from fifty cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents, weekly.

The population of France may be stated at thirty-two millions. Of these, seven and a half millions receive less than twenty dollars a year for their support; and nearly twenty-three millions of the inhabitants are compelled to procure the necessaries of life with from five to eight *sous*, (about the same number of cents,) daily. To an American, this statement seems to be hardly credible. Such a pittance would be insufficient to supply the meat, bread, and tea, or coffee, with their usual accompaniments, which are daily found on the tables of all classes of our citizens. The French are, consequently, compelled to live with proportionate frugality, in order to live at all; and we are informed, that seven and a half millions of the people do not eat meat, or wheaten bread. They live upon barley, rye, buck-wheat, chestnuts, and a few potatoes, and their drink is water.

In 1820, more than one hundred thousand, — one seventh part of all the inhabitants of Paris, — received support from the public charity; and one third of the inhabitants who died during the year, died in hospitals. We have no means of comparing the present state of that city with its condition at that period; but we are not aware of any material improvement in these respects.

The consequence of this general poverty of the laboring classes is, that they are compelled to work incessantly for the means of daily sustenance. During certain seasons of the

year, the women are employed in field labors. The ordinary implements of French husbandry are ill adapted to aid the farmer in his toil, and cows and asses, oxen and horses, are often seen yoked together to the same plough. It is stated by Simond, a late accurate and intelligent traveller, that the common wages of a hired laborer upon a farm, were two hundred francs yearly for men, and one hundred for women. This would give to the man in our country thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents, and to the woman eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents, annually. But he adds, that in consequence of short seasons, laborers were at that time very willing to work for their bread only.

The poverty of these classes, however, does not protect them from taxation. We have seen that a large proportion of the whole people are proprietors of the soil, either as owners or lessees; and we can, therefore, form an idea of the extent of taxation in France, when we learn that the taxes upon the lands are equal to one fifth of its net produce. So that a man, who should rent his farm for one hundred dollars a year, would be compelled to pay twenty dollars of that amount into the public treasury for taxes. This burden would, of course, fall upon the laboring classes, — the tillers of the soil.

The condition of the people of France, as respects education, varies in the different departments. In the northern and eastern portions of the kingdom, the people are better educated than in the central and western sections. In the northern provinces, fifty-two out of a hundred of the population can read and write; in the eastern, fifty-five out of a hundred; while in the western and central parts, from twenty-seven to twenty-five only in a hundred are able to read. This statement will serve to indicate the difference which exists between the condition of the laboring classes in France, and that of the same classes in Massachusetts, for instance, where scarcely one native citizen in a thousand is destitute of the rudiments of a school education.

We cannot dismiss this portion of our subject, without briefly inquiring how far the people of France are permitted to take part in the affairs of government. The members of the Chamber of Deputies, the popular branch of the government, are chosen by the people; but the qualifications of candidates for office, as well as of the electors, are so high, that the mass of the people are, in fact, far from having any important influence in

the election of the deputies, and in making the laws. No man can be an elector, who does not pay a direct tax of two hundred francs, (thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents ;) and when we remember the proportion of those, whose whole income does not exceed that amount, we perceive, at once, how small a number are qualified to vote. Thus, of more than thirty-two millions of inhabitants, far more than twice the amount of the population of the United States, less than one hundred and seventy thousand are qualified to vote in the elections ; so that, with all our restrictions, we have more than half as many electors in Massachusetts as there are in France, although her population is more than fifty times as great as ours. But even this boon, confined as it is to the rich, and wholly denied to the laboring classes, is of comparatively little value to the people. Every officer who comes in contact with them, from the minister of state to the petty constable of the village, is appointed by the crown, which has in its disposal more than one hundred thousand offices. The consequence is, as might be expected, that the government controls the elections, and a great majority of the deputies of the people are, in fact, but the creatures of the crown.

We ought not entirely to overlook the church establishments upon the continent, which, whatever be their form, must, in the end, depend for support upon the industry of the laboring classes.

In France, all religions are nominally tolerated, but the catholic is the national faith. The clergy exceed forty thousand in number, and cost the country, exclusive of fees, gifts, and other allowances from parishes, communes and departments, thirty-three million and nine hundred and eighteen francs annually.

In Spain, also, the burden of the church establishment is felt with great severity. There are in this church eight archbishops ; forty-four bishops ; one hundred and thirty chapters ; sixty thousand two hundred and thirty-eight secular priests ; fifteen thousand eight hundred and thirty-four inferior clergy ; three thousand and six monasteries and convents ; seventy-one thousand five hundred and eighty-five monks and nuns.*

* A singular mistake upon this subject is made by the writer of an article in the fifty-fourth volume of the *Edinburgh Review*. He says, " that the Spanish church rejoices in 58 archbishops ; 684 bishops ; 11,400 abbots ; 936 chapters ; 127,000 parishes ; 7000 hospitals ; 23,000 fraternities ; 46,000

The archbishop of Toledo has a revenue of six hundred thousand dollars, and the incomes of the other ecclesiastical dignitaries, though smaller in amount, are very large. Vast masses of property are locked up in the possession of the church.

We have been detained so long upon the continent, that we must hasten to what was once our father-land. With a common origin, a common language, and, to a certain extent, a community of laws and institutions, we are enabled more accurately to bring the true condition of our own citizens to the test of a comparison with that of Englishmen, than with that of any other people. It is her boast, that her citizens are the most free of any in Europe, and we are, therefore, led to examine, somewhat minutely, into the extent of those rights and privileges, which form their precious birth-right.

The first consideration that strikes us in this investigation, is the entirely artificial state of society in England. Everything is regulated by law. The tenure of property, as well as the constitution of government, the gradations of society, the commerce and trade of the country, the prices of agricultural produce, the value of rents, and a thousand other things, which bear more or less directly upon every class in the community, are either controlled by statute regulation, or what is equally imperative, by ancient usage. Every citizen, high or low, from his cradle to the grave, is hedged in and bound by rules and regulations, altogether arbitrary and artificial. Whatever progress reform may have made, it has wrought but little change in what may be called the domestic condition of society.

We cannot pass by Ireland in our inquiries, though we are aware that any picture we might borrow from the numerous accounts which are given of that wretched people, would seem to be highly colored and exaggerated. To one born and educated in New England, it is well nigh incredible, that human nature can sustain the sufferings and privations which the laboring classes of some districts in Ireland have long endured. It is not our purpose to speak of the causes of this state of things,

monasteries ; 135,000 convents ; 312,000 secular priests ; 200,000 inferior clergy ; 400,000 monks and nuns.” The account which we have given, is derived from Count Alexandre de Laborde’s *Itinéraire descriptif de L’Espagne*, published in 1809, a work of unquestionable authority. We are not aware that any material change has taken place since that period, tending to affect the accuracy of his representation.

but only to present some facts in relation to that unfortunate people, that our own citizens may know the true value of their own blessings.

The population of Ireland is about eight millions. In 1791, when it was about half as numerous as it now is, an enumeration was made of all the dwelling houses on the island. They amounted to seven hundred thousand. From the character of these houses, we may infer, in some measure, the condition of the inhabitants at the time. About one hundred and thirteen thousand of these dwelling houses were occupied by paupers. More than five hundred thousand had only one hearth in them, leaving a very small proportion which were so constructed as to accommodate their inmates with more than a single fire. The number of dwelling houses has probably doubled since that time, but we are not aware that the ratio of poverty has decreased. The soil of Ireland is owned by comparatively few individuals. These let out their lands in large tracts to jobbers or "middle men," who, in their turn, underlet them to *cottiers*, — a class of peasants who occupy and cultivate them. The proprietors of the soil live principally in England, or on the continent, and the cottiers, or cultivators, form the bulk of the Irish peasantry. Each of these occupies a cabin, and from a quarter of an acre to four or five acres of land. Their cabins are described as "four mud walls, with one entrance, and frequently without windows or chimneys." "Numbers have not a bed, or even a bed frame, sleeping upon straw or heath upon their clay floors." We might suppose this to be an exaggerated account, if we had not seen enough of Irish modes of living along the routes of the railways in our country, to confirm the truth of the description.

The rents paid by the cultivators for their lands vary in different counties, and according to the quality of the lands. But as the proprietor must live in luxury, and the jobber must be well paid by his speculations, and all this must come from the rents of the land, and as, moreover, the country is overstocked with population, whereby a great competition for land is created, the occupier is compelled to pay, in rent and tithes, the utmost farthing in his power. The Irish acre is nearly twice as large as ours, and the highest rent paid is ten guineas an acre. It varies from that sum down to four guineas. In some districts rents are from six to nine pounds, and in others, from four to seven pounds, per acre ; so that, by our mode of

computation, the rents vary from eight or nine dollars up to twenty-four dollars the acre. Whatever the amount may be, "it is," says a writer, "as nearly as can be calculated, fully and literally the whole produce of the soil, saving the small reserve of potatoes necessary for the subsistence of himself and family." And in addition to all this, his personal services must be rendered to his landlord whenever they are required. While he is compelled to pay a rent so onerous and unreasonable, the wages of a cottier, if he labors for a wealthier farmer, are proportionately low. They vary from fourpence to tenpence daily, making an average of from fivepence to sixpence through the year, or, in our currency, from nine and a half to eleven cents.

Even the manufacturers fare little better, as respects wages, than the laborers upon the soil. A writer in the *Westminster Review* states, that the wages of linen weavers around Belfast, in 1825, were one shilling per day; that in many instances, after laboring twelve hours in a day, only two shillings and sixpence were realized in a week; and that, in Down, the wages of weavers were as low as fivepence or sixpence a day.

With such scanty means of livelihood, the Irish peasantry are obliged to subsist upon the cheapest food. Potatoes are their chief support, and to these is sometimes added milk or buttermilk, and occasionally bread. But a cottier can rarely indulge in the luxury of meat. Everything that he can raise, except his potatoes, goes to the landlord for rent, or to the priest for tithes, and when the potatoe crop fails, beggary or starvation is his only alternative.

Nothing has heretofore ground the industry of Ireland like her church establishment. Although five sixths of her population are catholics, the church of England is the established one, and her clergy are supported out of the tithes of the lands. Some changes have been recently made in the constitution of this church, by a prospective reduction of the number of the archbishops and bishops, from twenty-two to twelve, and of course of the amount of their aggregate revenues, and by the removal of some serious impositions; but we are not yet able to ascertain the extent of the relief, which will be thus afforded. For less than one sixth of the people, there are seventeen hundred clergymen, whose aggregate income is one million three hundred thousand pounds, or more than five and a half millions of dollars. This, it will be remembered, does

not include what the catholics pay their own bishops and priests, nor what the presbyterians pay their clergy. The salaries of the latter, however, do not exceed one or two hundred pounds by the year. Who can wonder, then, to hear complaints from the Irish of their church and tithe system, drawn, as the tithes must be, from the very life blood of the laboring classes? "I have seen," says a writer who is quoted in the *Edinburgh Review*, "the favorite cow driven away, accompanied by the sighs, the tears, and the imprecations of a whole family, who were paddling along through the wet and dirt, to take their last affectionate farewell of this their only friend and benefactor, at the pound gate."

It would seem as if the Irish paid enough in church rates and other taxes, to entitle them to receive in return the means of educating their children. Even these are but partially enjoyed. In 1825, two hundred and fifty thousand Irish children were destitute of any means of education, and the instruction of those who had access to schools was very imperfect, and often almost worse than none.

In passing from Ireland, we can only glance at the hardy and industrious Scotch, so proverbial for intelligence and thrift. The population of Scotland is between two and three millions. The mode of living among the laboring classes, where meat, except on Sundays, is rarely used, would hardly satisfy the appetite of a New England working man, who, from his childhood, never knows the want of the necessaries or many of the luxuries of life. In the Lowlands, almost every individual is taught to read and write, but in the Highlands, education is very much neglected. In some parts of them not more than three out of ten are able to read.

The first great division of the population of England to which we shall advert, is into nobles and commoners. The titles of the nobility to their rank are either hereditary, or by gift from the crown. In whatever way acquired, their possessors form, as it were, a connecting link between the crown and the people.

Another marked distinction between classes in England is that between those who are proprietors, and those who are not. Only one sixth part of her immense population are proprietors of the soil, although one third part of the people are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Yet for this small fraction of the population, most of her important laws seem to have been made. The real political power is in the hands of the land-owners, while the interests of the ten or eleven millions of

manufacturers, traders and laborers, must yield to those of the proprietors of the soil. It is principally for these considerations that the "corn laws," so oppressive upon the laboring classes, were made and are continued. The object of thus forcing up the price of grain, is to enable the tenant who hires and tills the land to sell his produce so high, that he can afford to pay his landlord a high rent for his land. Thus, in effect, the laboring and industrious classes are severely taxed upon the very necessities of life, to support the wealthy land-holder. Another consequence of this distinction between land and other property, is the law of primogeniture, by which alone estates can be kept together in masses, like those in England.

The great division of the laboring classes in England, with the exception of those engaged in commerce, is into the agricultural and manufacturing departments.

The wages of laborers upon farms depend very much upon the number of the poor in the district, where the labor is to be performed. We shall have occasion to say more upon the subject of the English poor laws; but we may here state that, as it is an object for overseers to keep the poor employed, wherever they are numerous their labor must come in competition with that of other laborers, and thus reduce it oftentimes to the very lowest point at which the workman can subsist upon his earnings. By a statement made in 1824, which is before us, the wages of laborers upon farms in Kent, Essex, Bedford, Suffolk and Norfolk, appear to have been as low as sixpence a day. In other counties, the highest wages were nine shillings (two dollars) per week, while in some of the northern counties, wages fluctuated from twelve to fifteen shillings (two dollars and sixty-six cents to three dollars and thirty-three cents,) per week. From a very recent report of a committee of Parliament, we have many further details as to the prices paid for agricultural labor, and the effect of the system of poor laws upon the laboring classes. From that report, it would seem that the wages of laborers in the immediate neighborhood of London, are about three shillings a day; though within twenty miles of the metropolis, many laborers did not receive more than half that amount. In the season of harvesting, great numbers of the Irish come over to England to labor in the fields, and in some districts they receive from two to four shillings a day, and in others not so much. In one parish,

where there was not a surplus of laborers, the wages paid, as stated by a witness examined before the committee, were about ten shillings a week. But even in the adjacent parishes, there was a surplus of laborers, which, of course, reduced the wages in them to a much lower sum. We cannot stop to explain the reason of this difference, except to remark that, as the poor in England are supported in their respective parishes, they cannot, or will not leave them to seek employment elsewhere, even when they are assured of high wages and constant employment.

We have enumerated but a part of the embarrassments to which the English laborer is subject, and in view even of these, we may readily credit the statement of a writer in the *London Quarterly Review*, when he says, that "in the road in which the English laborer *must* travel, the poor-house is the last stage on his way to the grave."

We are not able to fix the ratio between the wages of agricultural and manufacturing laborers, but we are not aware that those of the latter are much higher, all things considered, than those of the tillers of the soil. One thing is certain, that, as soon as any considerable stagnation in business is felt, the workmen in the manufacturing towns are thrown into distress, and sometimes reduced almost to starvation. A constant struggle appears to be maintained by the employers against those whom they hire, to reduce wages to the very lowest point at which life can be sustained, and very melancholy scenes of suffering and distress in the manufacturing districts are described in the reports and debates of Parliament. A part of these abuses, so far as relates to the over-working of children in factories, have been, we believe, partially corrected by acts of Parliament, and we therefore pass them over. It was stated in 1819, by the member of Parliament for Coventry, that there were in that town five classes of manufacturers, each working sixteen hours in a day. The first class earned ten shillings, the second, five shillings and sixpence, the third three shillings and ninepence, the others two shillings and one shilling and sixpence, per week. Many other laborers worked fifteen or sixteen hours in a day, and could not earn more than seven shillings per week. The wages of manufacturers, therefore, as will be perceived, varied from thirty-three cents weekly, to two dollars and twenty-five cents.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* states, that in the year

1819, a weaver's wages in Glasgow were five shillings and sixpence or six shillings a week ; and that in Lancashire, wages varied from six to twelve shillings a week, for fifteen hours' labor in a day. The Nottingham stocking-weavers, as stated by them in a public address, after working from fourteen to sixteen hours in a day, only earned from four to seven shillings a week, and were obliged to subsist upon bread and water, or potatoes and salt.

We have no data at hand, from which to learn the present wages of manufacturers in England, nor how those of weavers among manufacturers, or field laborers among other operatives, compare in amount. But from the increase of population to be fed, and the frequently depressed state of manufactures there, we may, it would seem, safely assume, that wages are now, as they have long been, at the lowest point at which the laborer can sustain himself and family.

The consequence of this state of things is, that the working classes must content themselves with a meagre diet, and with few comforts, and have little time or opportunity for the enlargement and cultivation of their minds. All these privations, however, might probably be borne with comparative ease, if theirs was the common lot. There is truth and philosophy in the adage, that "misery loves company," and where the poor man

" Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
To shame the meanness of his humble shed,"

he is content with his lot, however hard it may be. But in England, the poverty of the laboring classes is felt amidst palaces of surpassing splendor, and individual wealth almost beyond computation, — wealth, not won by the industry of him who enjoys it, but heaped up and transmitted from sire to son under the unchangeable laws of primogeniture. The annual incomes of some of these families are from one hundred and fifty thousand to even more than three hundred thousand pounds ; and thus, while the hard toil of one man is rewarded with an income of a hundred dollars, the birth and title of another ensure him an income of a million.

But this is not all. Such a state of things is not only oppressive to the poorer classes, but often becomes utterly ruinous in its effects. Their downward progress is only stopped by the poor-house, and thus a new weight is added to the burden, which is pressing down the industry of the nation.

The number and expense of the poor in England are almost beyond belief. In Scotland and Ireland there are no poor rates, nor were there any in England until the time of Queen Elizabeth. Now the number of paupers has so increased, that the poor rate assessed upon some estates actually exceeds the rents, and, in consequence, many estates have been abandoned by their owners. We state this upon the authority of a very recent parliamentary report, in which the names of many parishes are given, where the poor rates are depopulating the district ; — as no man can afford to take an estate, rent free, if he must pay the poor-tax which is assessed upon it.

We cannot state precisely the aggregate of the poor rates in England. In 1826, it amounted to more than seven million pounds, (exceeding thirty-one million dollars,) and we have no reason to believe that it has fallen in amount since that time. This would make the expense of supporting the poor alone, in England, nearly, if not quite, twice as great as the whole current expenditure of the government of the United States. This tax would of itself seem to be somewhat burdensome upon the industry of Great Britain, but it forms only a single item of the current international expenses of the government, which fall directly upon the people. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* states the amount of tithes annually paid for the support of the regular church establishment in England and Wales, not, of course, including catholics and dissenters, at five million six hundred thousand pounds, about twenty-five millions of dollars. The average salaries paid to the bishops and archbishops exceed twenty-five thousand dollars a year, and some of them receive as much as a hundred thousand dollars ; while a numerous class of the clergy, the laboring clergy too, are obliged to content themselves with a scanty subsistence. So unequal is the distribution of property, power and right. Besides the burdens already mentioned, the people of England pay for the interest and management of their national debt, more than a hundred millions of dollars annually, to say nothing of a nearly equal amount of direct and indirect taxes, which are raised to sustain the contingent expenses of the crown. Look at England in whatever light you will, she is an extraordinary nation. Everything is in extremes. Splendid enterprises, splendid cities, splendid palaces, splendid fortunes and splendid charities, strike us whenever we contemplate her past history or her present condition ; but behind these, we find a people ground to the dust with

poverty and taxes, toiling for a scanty subsistence, or sustained by the hand of public charity. Everything is unnatural and arbitrary, nor can we wonder if the working-men there cry out against oppression, or feel a hostility towards their lordly masters.

It may be asked why these evils are not corrected, why the people do not equalize their burdens and their privileges? It is true, the English government is called free; it is true also, that it is nominally a representative one, and that the civil power is in reality in the hands of the commons. So it has been for years, and we will now see who these representatives of the people have been.

The House of Commons consists of six hundred and fifty-eight members, and of the Parliament which was dissolved in 1831, three hundred and fifty-four members were returned by the peers, and one hundred and eleven by commoners, who returned themselves or their friends. Boroughs, without an inhabitant, returned in some instances two members each, and cities with thousands of inhabitants sent none, or at most a single member to the House. Since that time the much talked of reform has taken place. But to show how far, even now, the people have any voice in the election of members of Parliament, we need only state, that a country member, in order to be eligible to a seat in that body, must possess real estate, the income of which exceeds twenty-five hundred dollars by the year; and no man can be a voter who does not, if in a city or borough, rent a building of the annual value of ten pounds, or if in the country, occupy a freehold estate of the same yearly value. The consequence of this is, that only a small fraction of the people can vote, and a far smaller portion can be eligible to Parliament. Thus in some boroughs, which send members to Parliament, of three thousand inhabitants, there are not more than thirteen or fourteen voters. In Carlisle, for instance, with twenty thousand inhabitants, there are but about seven hundred and fifty voters; and in Liverpool, with one hundred and eighty-nine thousand people, only a little upwards of three thousand are qualified to vote.

Such is the condition of a considerable portion of the laboring classes in the leading states of Europe. It would be well worth the care of those, who have turned their attention to these subjects in America, to contrast the state of things described,

with that which prevails in this country. But this is a subject too important to be despatched in a summary manner, and in the brief space remaining at the close of our article.

ART. VI. — *Dr. Channing.*

The Ministry for the Poor. A Discourse, delivered before the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches in Boston, on their first Anniversary, April 9th, 1835. By WILLIAM E. CHANNING. Boston. 1835.

WE said in our last number, that we considered Mr. Irving the best living writer of English prose. If we could be induced to withdraw or in some degree to qualify this remark, we think that it would be in favor of the author of this discourse : — and it is creditable to the literary character of the country, that the competition for the palm of the highest excellence in writing English, should now be between the different American authors. Such has been the rapid progress of our literature since the very recent period, when it was inquired, with some degree of plausibility, in a respectable English review : — *who reads an American book?* As respects the mere form of language, we rather give the preference to the style of Dr. Channing. It is equally elegant, and a little more pure, correct and pointed than that of Mr. Irving. In reality, however, these two distinguished persons can hardly be said to come into competition. — Elegance, correctness, purity, power, and point in the use of language, though essential, are after all, only superficial qualities ; — the outward flourishes and ornaments of a good style ; — of which the substantial part, — the *soul*, as Shakspeare has it, — is the sense ; and here these two writers work with different materials, and belong to different classes. Mr. Irving is properly a poet : Dr. Channing a philosopher. Mr. Irving's field of observation is the surface of nature ; and whether he undertakes to give us the result in the form of a portrait or a fancy-piece, it is still a picture : — a vivid and beautiful representation of the many-colored hues, that compose the brilliant and ever-varying outside of society. Dr. Channing, on the other hand, deals in general truths : — he looks through the external forms of things in search of the